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Negarit
The Official Record of the Crown Council of Ethiopia

English-language Edition

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Volume I, No. 2 (New Series) May 31, 1999 (Western Calendar) ሚያዝያ ፳፬ ፲፱፻፺፯ ዓ.ም.

Crown Council President His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie meets in Washington DC with Nigerian President-elect Olusegun Obasanjo to discuss ways to restore peace to the Horn of Africa.

Death of Prof. Asrat Called "Liquidation"

ETHIOPIA'S most famous victim of the current Addis Ababa administration and onetime leader of the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), Professor Asrat Woldeyes, passed away on May 14, 1999, at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, USA. He died from complications from a heart ailment which had been exacerbated by the effects of his long and internationally-condemned imprisonment and ill-treatment at the hands of the Meles administration.

The Crown Council immediately said that Dr Asrat's untimely death was "virtual state liquidation", and was directly attributable to the Meles administration.

Prof. Asrat, a medical doctor and one of Ethiopia's leading scientists and humanitarians, had been suffering from a variety of ailments, mostly centering around a heart disorder, when Meles administration officials — faced with daily protests around the world and mounting hostility from major governments — released him to seek medical treatment abroad just before Western Christmas 1998. He has been hospitalized ever since.

He had been personal physician to the late Emperor Haile Selassie I for a quarter century. He had been dismissed from his post at the Black Lion Hospital, in Addis Ababa, when the TPLF administration of Meles Zenawi seized power in 1991.

Prof. Asrat's family, including his two sons, had gathered to be with him at the hospital at the end. As well, the President of the Crown Council, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie and Princess Gelila Fesseha, a niece of the Professor, were with him. *Le'ult* Gelila helped spearhead the campaign to have Dr Asrat released from his illegal imprisonment.

The Professor, who was in his seventies when he died, was preparing his legacy manifesto before his condition worsened in early May.

"Professor Asrat has already created his greatest legacy," Crown Council President Prince Ermias said. "His legacy is that he has reaffirmed Ethiopia can only survive as a united, democratic country, and that this prize is worth sacrifice to achieve. Professor Asrat has always been a man of peace, dignity and intelligent reason. His imprisonment on trumped-up charges only serves to highlight the nobility of his non-violent protest and the bankruptcy of policies which are imposed by those who fear the will of the people. We cannot allow his sacrifice to be in vain. We cannot forget that his life has been shortened by what amounts to State murder, because he should have been able to complete his medical and teaching career in peace, and he should have been able to look forward to a long and happy retirement. All of this was denied to him, as such freedom is being denied to so many Ethiopians under illegal detainment by the Meles administration."

The Meles administration released Dr Asrat when it became clear that his condition was deteriorating rapidly in prison. He had already become one of the focal points of protest against the administration, and officials feared that he would become a martyr if he died in prison.

Professor Asrat Woldeyes

"There is no doubt that Dr Asrat, who never saw himself as a martyr but rather as someone who needed to uphold principles of integrity and Ethiopianness, is now an even greater symbol of Ethiopia's need for unity and for an end to the kind of repression which has characterized the totalitarianism of the Meles administration," said one foreign diplomat in Addis Ababa, contacted by *Negarit* following Dr Asrat's death. "His death, even released from custody, reflects on Meles." ★

Education

Real Enthusiasm Shown on Crown Scholarships

The Ethiopian Crown Council has reported a landslide of applications and expressions of interests in the special scholarships which have been placed at the disposal of the Crown for Ethiopian students. Ambassador International University, which a month ago granted the Crown 15 four-year scholarships worth $1.2-million, said that the University, as well as the Council, had been receiving a constant flow of enquiries about the scholarships.

The University has referred all the enquiries to the Crown Council. The Council has begun the process of establishing a committee in Addis Ababa which will review all applications before final selection for the Haile Selassie Fund Scholarships.

◆ **See separate story, page eight.**

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Nigeria's Obasanjo Meets With Crown President

WASHINGTON DC: — Responding to media questions, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, President of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, confirmed that he had met with the President-elect of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo, during the Nigerian leader's April Washington visit.

"We had very positive discussions about African problems in general and specifically about the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea," Prince Ermias said. "President-elect Obasanjo is very well-informed about the problem and is taking a strong interest in helping to resolve it."

"The meeting was a private one and so I cannot go into details as to what was discussed, other than to say that President-elect Obasanjo was keen to hear our views."

Prince Ermias confirmed that he had taken a letter of congratulations from the Crown Council to the Nigerian President-elect, on his recent election victory, and had presented the leader with a copy of the new book, *Ethiopia Reaches Her Hand Unto God.*

The Nigerian leader held a series of meetings in Washington DC with US Administration officials, including President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger and key State Department Africa desk officials. President-elect Obasanjo confirmed that he had been taking an interest in the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, and had also received briefings on the dispute from, among others, the Italian President.

The President-elect expressed a strong desire to Prince Ermias that the new Nigerian Government should actively involve itself in seeking a resolution to the conflict in the Horn of Africa. Prince Ermias congratulated General Obasanjo on his electoral victory which, he said, gave hope of free and fair elections for Ethiopians in the future. ★

International Relations

Council President Completes Three-Nation Diplomatic Tour

WASHINGTON DC, May 8, 1999: — The President of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie returned tonight to Washington DC after a busy, four-day schedule of visits to three Caribbean nations where he discussed African and Ethiopian issues with several national leaders.

Prince Ermias held extremely cordial meetings in Antigua with the Governor-General, His Excellency Sir James Carlisle, before going to Barbados where he met with the Minister for Education, Culture and Youth Affairs, Mia Mottley. Prince Ermias discussed Ethiopian and Pan-African issues with Ms Mottley in what were described as "extremely productive" talks.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Prince Ermias met with the Prime Minister, Sir James Mitchell, and also held detailed discussions with the Minister for Trade and Industry, John Horne.

While in Barbados, Prince Ermias also held cordial talks with His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who has paid several visits to Ethiopia in the past, and who was invested by the late Emperor Haile Selassie with the Order of the Queen of Sheba. As well, in Barbados, Prince Ermias held lengthy and friendly talks with former Nigerian head-of-state General Yakubu Gowon.

The Caribbean visit was part of an ongoing worldwide diplomatic initiative by the Crown Council to familiarize world leaders with events in Ethiopia — particularly the significance globally of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea — and with the Crown's initiatives to restore stability to the Horn of Africa.

While in Barbados, the Crown Council delegation visited the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and educational center and met with *Abba* Liqa Maemiran Zacharias, who briefed Prince Ermias about the programs being undertaken in the Caribbean by the Church. Of particular interest was the initiative, *Let's Save the Children*, spearheaded by *Abba* Liqa Maemiran Zacharias at the World Council of Churches in Zimbabwe last December. More details on this in the next edition. ★

◆ **See pictures, page three**

Crown Supports Human Rights Demonstrations

The Ethiopian Crown Council, the body which represents the Ethiopian Crown, strongly supported the May 8 worldwide demonstrations by Ethiopian communities protesting the lack of human rights in Ethiopia.

Ethiopians around the world demonstrated for the release of Ethiopian political prisoners, and demanded that fundamental human rights be respected by the administration now in power in Addis Ababa. They also called for a process of national reconciliation and dialog in a free society.

Crown Council President Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, who was returning from a diplomatic trip to three Caribbean nations on May 8, said that the momentum toward national unity and progress on human rights issues in Ethiopia was being halted by the policies of the Addis Ababa administration.

"This has jeopardized our national ability to unite and respond to threats to our security and sovereignty," he said. "Unless we develop a society which is built on tolerance and which respects alternative views, we are doomed to further weakening of our country, and ultimately we jeopardize our existence as a multi-communal, multi-religious state."

"War is the ultimate denial of fundamental human rights. To progress on a path of building civil society, it is incumbent on the administration in Addis Ababa to win the people's goodwill with tangible changes in its policies," Prince Ermias said. "We can no longer be content to merely accept the rhetoric which has so far not been matched by deeds."

"As thousands of Ethiopians around the world commemorate their fellow-countrymen who fought and died for national sovereignty, dignity and freedom, we now must pray and fight for those who remain illegally imprisoned or oppressed. The failure of the administration to change, and its insistence on using the system of justice in Ethiopia as a tool of its political survival, means that all Ethiopians are in chains."

Prince Ermias continued: "Justice has eluded the Ethiopian people. We have been betrayed and disappointed by the lack of action of the international community. There are 13,000 political prisoners in Ethiopian prisons, according to Amnesty International. We have moved from the age of one genocidal leader — Mengistu Haile Mariam — who remains free, unpunished and in comfort while his victims, dead and alive, go unavenged, to another leader, who, although not of the same caste as Mengistu, has plunged our country deeply into disunity and war."

"Today, a new generation of Ethiopians is decrying the loss of our once-proud culture and civilization. We will recover it. We will not stand by any longer and watch our own destruction. Never again!"

"We challenge the Addis administration to begin a meaningful dialog with all elements of the Ethiopian society with a view to restoring the nation's human rights, its dignity and its symbols. And we challenge the international community to stand by the Ethiopian people, and not to pay only lip-service to the fundamental concept of human rights. The international community must be willing and able to pressure the Addis Ababa administration to stand by the international norms of decent behavior to which Ethiopia is a signatory within the framework of the United Nations, of which Emperor Haile Selassie I was one of the founding fathers."

"The Ethiopian Crown, which championed human rights and dignity — and Ethiopian freedom — in the League of Nations in 1935, remains ready to debate the issue today, and with urgency."

The demonstrations, which drew significant crowds in many capital cities around the world, brought attention to the Ethiopian cause from numerous governments. The UK Government, which had said that the Meles administration's record on human rights was improving because of the release in December of Dr Asrat Woldeyes, noted that conditions had not, in fact, improved.★

Now, For the First Time:

The Symbols and Substance of the Contribution of Ethiopia's Imperial House to the country's, and the world's future strategic needs ...

Imperial Ethiopia's Unique Symbols, Structures and Rôle in the Modern World
ETHIOPIA Reaches Her Hand Unto God
By Gregory R. Copley
With a Foreword by His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie

The Throne of Solomon, which has ruled Ethiopia for some 3,000 years, is also the least-documented in Western terms. Today, the Crown lives in exile, since the 1974 coup and subsequent revolution. But, since the re-establishment of the Crown's constitutionally-authorized governing body, the Imperial Crown Council, by His Imperial Majesty Emperor Amha Selassie I in 1993, the Ethiopian Monarchy has been taking an active rôle in bringing together the peoples of Ethiopia, including those scattered around the world in the Ethiopian diaspora. Today, the aims of the Crown Council — which has the responsibility for approving the accession to the Throne of the next Emperor — include ensuring that the various peoples of Ethiopia have a focus around which to unify, and that the world's attention is brought to bear on the plight of the Ethiopian underprivileged and those suffering in refugee camps.

With the publication of this new book, **Ethiopia Reaches Her Hand Unto God** *Imperial Ethiopia's Unique Symbols, Structure and Rôle in the Modern World,* there is finally an authoritative and comprehensive guide to the meaning of the important symbols of recognition, set within the framework of the Crown's history.*

Ethiopia Reaches Her Hand Unto God *has been published by the Defense & Foreign Affairs Group in association with the International Strategic Studies Association. This Group has, for the past 25 years, provided professional publications, books and information services for more than 170 countries around the world, in most cases providing such services at head-of-state, head-of-government, or cabinet/head-of-service level. This new book is authored by Gregory R. Copley, Editor-in-Chief of the Defense & Foreign Affairs Group since its inception, and advisor to a number of governments. Mr Copley was strategic advisor to the late Emperor Amha Selassie.* ***His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile Selassie,*** *President of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, has written the Foreword and is a Patron of this book, which has benefited from significant research and access to hitherto restricted documents.*

The book has more than 70 beautiful illustrations and is available as a cloth-bound or paperback edition. It includes some 250 pages of extensively-researched and documented, easy-to-read text, making it not only a valuable reference volume, but a pleasure to read.

** The Phrase "Ethiopia Reaches Her Hand Unto God" is taken from Psalms 68, the Song of David, and is used on a number of Ethiopian medals and crests.*

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Or Fax to:
+1 (703) 684-7476.

Negarit's First Edition Reaches Global Audience

The first edition of the new series of *Negarit*, the Official Record of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, was a major success, with copies reaching Ethiopians and researchers interested in Ethiopia in more than 20 countries. Regular newsstand sales exceeded expectations and subscriptions have been coming in daily to the *Negarit* offices in the Washington DC area.

"What we have achieved with the first edition of *Negarit* is only the beginning," a spokesman for the newspaper said. "We have plans to expand the coverage of the newspaper, so that it is truly a voice of hope and a source of news and inspiration to Ethiopians around the world. We will be expanding the Amharic-language content as we progress, and we have already invested in a number of Amharic computer programs. We have also begun adding correspondents around the world."

The newspaper is still looking for editorial contributors and volunteers, as well as distribution agents. Anyone interested in participating in the development of the newspaper should fax its US offices on +1 (703) 684-7476, email it at Negarit@EthiopianCrown.org, or write to PO Box 20863, Alexandria, Virginia 22320, USA.

"Ethiopians are now finding their voice to speak out for the unity of the nation. *Negarit* and the Crown website are vital elements of this," the newspaper spokesman said. ★

Obituary

Crown Records Passing of Crown Council Member *Dejazmatch* Belai Bezuneh

Washington DC, April 23, 1999: — In a Court Statement issued today, His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, President of the Ethiopian Crown Council, announced the sad passing on April 22 of His Excellency *Dejazmatch* Belai Bezuneh, 77, a member of the Crown Council.

Dejazmatch Belai, who died in Alexandria, Virginia, in the US, had been one of the heroes of the war against the Italian invasion of 1935-1941. He was one of the group known as "the five-year patriots" indicating that he had resisted the Italian fascist forces throughout their attempted conquest of Ethiopia.

After the war, *Dejazmatch* Belai served in various administrative capacities during the reign of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. After the coup in 1974, he joined the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) forces, based then out of the Sudan, in their fight against the *Dergue* dictatorship which had seized power and which had killed the Emperor.

Prince Ermias said: "*Dejazmatch* Belai joined the Crown Council of His Late Majesty Emperor Amha Selassie I and continued the fight for Ethiopia's freedom. He was later named by Emperor Amha Selassie to the current Crown Council, continuing until his death as a patriot fighting for Ethiopia's freedom. His wise counsel and determined spirit for Ethiopia's unity will forever remain part of his legacy."

Prince Ermias said that no decision had yet been made as to who would fill the vacancy in the Crown Council ranks left by the sad death of *Dejazmatch* Belai. ★

Council Website Now Operational

Ethiopians in April began taking advantage of a new website dedicated to their country's unique history: the official website of the Ethiopian Crown Council. During its first weeks in operation, even before it had been fully registered with internet search engines, many thousands of Ethiopians from around the world visited the site for the latest news.

The new website address is **www. EthiopianCrown.org**, and the site contains more than 200 pages of data. It is updated every few days with current Council statements and news, and also has extensive sections on Ethiopian history, culture, charities, educational scholarships and much more.

The well-illustrated site also contains background and legal documents on the Crown Council itself. It will soon add regular audio broadcasts in Amharic to the website. ★

Working Toward the Promise of the Blessing of Ethiopian Unity

The President of the Ethiopian Crown Council, His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, was in Boston on May 13 to deliver a speech to the Ethiopian National Congress. The following is the text of his remarks:

WHAT A PLEASURE it is to be with you in Boston today to be able to celebrate with Ethiopians and non-Ethiopians alike the importance of the preservation of Ethiopia's unique and rich culture and heritage. I would like to thank the Ethiopian Community in Boston and the Ethiopian National Congress for inviting me to make a few remarks today on our beloved country. Unfortunately, I must leave you today after this gathering to return to Philadelphia where one of the champions of Ethiopian freedom, Dr Asrat Woldeyes, lies gravely ill, the result of many years of illegal and cruel imprisonment. His life has been shortened by intolerance, but his legacy lengthened by his resistance to this fact.

BOSTON RECENTLY witnessed the stamina and grace of Fatuma Roba in the Boston Marathon. By winning the race, and raising our Ethiopian flag high, she championed what is best in all of us. Fatuma reminded us of the power of perseverance, the will to win against all odds. Fatuma brought to the world, in a flash, the focus of international admiration. She inspired and motivated us with her pride in her Ethiopianness.

Today, because of incessant civil wars, there are attempts to polarize Ethiopian society into its various national elements, undoing the painstaking historical process of unification. Pride in Ethiopianness is discouraged today by those who control our country. Amharas are no longer expected to look out for the interests of Oromos; the Oromos are not expected to care about the fate of Tigreans, and so on.

Is this really "progress"? Is this really "self-determination"? Xenophobia is the opposite of the kind of expansive and embracing national pride which Fatuma Roba showed us.

In a world increasingly dominated by global languages, global economic trends, and seamlessly-integrated communications, can we expect that the life of an Oromo-speaking child will be better because someone said: "Your own language is the source of *all* pride and all attempts at working with your kinsmen across a nearby border are worthless."?

Of course not!

Yes! it is important to know your local language, culture and customs. Yes! it is important to bring decisionmaking processes closer to the people. But ethnic chauvinism is the ugly face of ethnic politics.

Politicians wish to retain power regardless of the fact that they cannot inspire the many and richly-varied people of the Great Ethiopian Empire to support a common dream. The kind of ethnic federalism we see in Ethiopia today is a method to divide and rule the people, so that those in power, who are a minority, may not be challenged. What the world is weeping about in the former Yugoslavia is the problem which Ethiopians have been bearing for the past six years. In Ethiopia, "ethnic cleansing", chauvinism and hatred have been conducted without television cameras, while an unwitting world applauded what it called "a new generation of leaders" in Africa. It seems like the same old generation of suspicion, hatred and greed to many of us.

We have seen our society become less tolerant, more isolated, and embroiled in yet another spate of internal and regional conflicts. This, in a region where instability reigns, is a very worrisome feature.

Where we should be tackling the problems of poverty, lack of education, AIDS and the lack of adequate healthcare generally, as well as the lack of infrastructure, we are being lured by the macabre sideshow of another war: the very fundamental negation of human rights.

ETHIOPIANS have created a courageous and inherently democratic society of peoples. So where people demand the right to ask questions, the government must not take this to be a subversive act. It is a fundamental right! We must all learn to practice the art of negotiation and avoid resort to war. We have tried war, and it has aged us beyond the unbroken 3,000 years of our unified culture.

And if Ethiopians are fundamentally courageous and democratic, they are also proud and fiercely independent. We have jealously guarded our independence to a degree never seen in any other country in the world. We have never allowed our country to be submerged into a colonial entity. Our forefathers have sacrificed heavily for this. And so many more Ethiopians in recent months and years have sacrificed themselves for the preservation of Ethiopia.

We must not become a lost generation, succumbing to greed, selfishness and anarchy. We must begin to build an increasingly harmonious and prosperous society.

We will not achieve this, however, if we jeopardize our national ability to unite in order to respond to threats to our security and sovereignty.

Unless we — as individuals and as Ethiopian nations — absolutely and consciously commit to building a society which is founded on tolerance and respect for alternative views, one which is rooted in reconciliation, then we are further weakening our country. Ultimately, by inaction, or by mirroring the ethnic separatism of the ruling Addis politicians, we jeopardize our existence as a multi-communal, multi-religious state.

The administration in Ethiopia — if it is to build a civil society which retains Ethiopia's present or historic borders — *must* make tangible changes in its policies.

Subjugation can only work for a while, and while subjugation is in place, prosperity is absent.

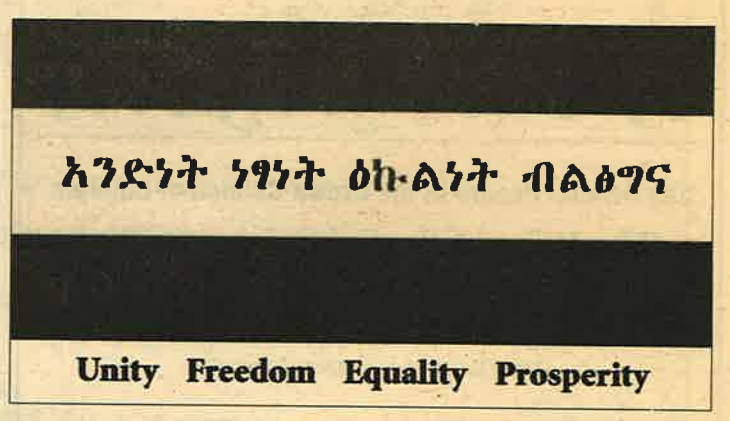
Through all of this, the Ethiopian Crown remains there for the people of Ethiopia, as their impartial symbol of unity. It is there to offer inspiration and hope. It is there to protect the Constitution of the People's choice.

The Crown must remain above politics, and offer the long-term leadership which establishes the framework of society, the freedom of peoples to accord each other respect, the freedom of people to work *together* to progress the wellbeing and happiness of all.

The Crown is there to remind Ethiopians of *every* communal, linguistic and religious group of their proud history.

We pray to see our flag — raised here in Boston by Fatuma Roba — fly high and proudly once more in Ethiopia. For what made Ethiopia a uniquely proud culture was the fact that the Ethiopian Lion Flag flew over a number of uniquely proud cultures which came together and by consensus created a sum even greater than the total of its parts.

An astronaut in the United States once said that the technology which took him to the heavens was the sum of many parts, each made by the lowest bidder. Ethiopia is the sum of many parts each made by the *highest* bidders: the peoples who have given their lives to the fulfillment of their cultures. Ethiopia as a whole has a quality based on the historic and unique brilliance of its individual parts. And only by *consensus* does this society move safely, confidently and intact into the future. ★



The "second flag" on the Crown Council website shows one of the Crown's slogans: Unity, Freedom, Equality, Prosperity, on the background of the Ethiopian rainbow colors.

Council Delegation Meets Old Friends and Makes New Ones as it Visits Three Caribbean States

... See story, page one

Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie (left) talks with HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh (right), during a meeting in Barbados, during the Crown Council's three-nation tour. The President of the International Strategic Studies Association, Gregory Copley, is shown center.

Below: Former Nigerian Head-of-State General Yokubu Gowon, who now runs a major political institute in Nigeria, met in Barbados with Prince Ermias. The two had met previously, and General Gowon also was well-known to the late Emperor Haile Selassie I. "I looked upon the Emperor as a father to me," General Gowon said.

The Governor-General of Antigua & Barbuda, His Excellency Sir James Carlisle (left) relaxes over a working lunch with Prince Ermias at Nelson's Dockyard, in Antigua.

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ነጋሪት Negarit

The Official Record of the Crown Council of Ethiopia

The Voice of the Solomonic Crown

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Freedom Past and Future

THE WORD "freedom" is truly a rare and marvelous word. It is difficult to measure the worth of freedom. It is difficult to describe it in words. Let us just call it "honor" and keep it. When we say "freedom", it is inherently what man must possess, must strive for, and must maintain as a fundamental right. People who have no freedom live below those who possess freedom.

On the other hand, freedom is a mark of distinction for Ethiopians. Freedom and Ethiopia are synonymous. They are different sides of the same coin. Those who have denied the *thirst and hunger* for freedom for Ethiopians are the enemy who directly or indirectly, or collaboratively, participated in the actual denial of freedom. The term "enemy" is applied to those who deny fundamental human rights, who confiscate the property of their citizenry, who deny people the opportunity to work, and therefore prosper. A citizen to whom all these are denied cannot be said to possess freedom. It can be said that such a victim has no power over his own and his family's destiny. He is stripped of every right and can be considered a wounded man.

The Ethiopian peoples' foremost mark of identity has always been the fact that they have been the proprietors of their own freedom. It has now been some time since this is no longer the case. It has also been a while since Ethiopians have become forlorn. The Ethiopian has had to sacrifice himself, his children, his property. His loss of total freedom is no longer hidden.

Freedom is not to be gotten by begging or be given as a gift. It is such a fundamental right that each soul has to cry out and stand up for its basic principle. When there is an absence of freedom, how can other rights exist? Without freedom, a man is condemned to being the living dead. The condition of such a state reduces man to his most basic element, to that of an animal.

Those who because of the lack of freedom are not masters of their own destiny, are thus under continuous subjugation. And those who after all perpetuate subjugation are universally known as the enemies of the fundamental rights of people.

The Ethiopian people have sacrificed a great deal and have crushed their skulls to maintain their freedom and to confront and to defeat those who came to subjugate them. Ethiopian history has called them heroes, has raised them to the highest pedestal in the national consciousness. One of the greatest dates to be recorded in such annals of Ethiopian history has been the commemoration of the liberation anniversary falling on May 5 of each year. This is the day that Ethiopians from all over the country gather. It is the day that they celebrate their victory over the oppressor. Is there greater happiness than the happiness achieved in defense of one's freedom? Did not the patriot happily sacrifice himself for this noble goal? It is appropriate to commemorate this day in love and respect to the memory of all those who died for freedom.

Freedom is not gained if it is merely attained from one oppressor only to be lost to another oppressor, moving from one type of colonialism to another.

Continued on Page Eight

Ethiopian History

The Impact of Geography on Ethiopia's Strategic Development

By Gregory R. Copley

Taken from his recent book, Ethiopia Reaches Her Hand Unto God

CIVILIZATIONS SURVIVE and prosper, and are shaped, by the geography which defines their rainfall, their proximity (or isolation) relative to other communities, and their access to traditional trade routes such as seaways or riverways. Peoples adapt to their surroundings and are influenced by their contact with other cultures. History has brought together the various historic European Civilizations into a single unit which we now call "the West" in such a way that the influences of geography which were paramount only a century ago are today of secondary importance to the cultural phenomenon of the civilizsation.

But the peoples of what is today Ethiopia, although now influenced by the global community of which it is an increasing part, developed unique civilizational characteristics over many millennia due to the geographic and topographic phenomena which protected it from many of the influences of other civilisations. As a result, distinctly Ethiopian patterns emerged of society, military structure, social and noble ranks, religious interpretation, and so on. The isolation of much of the society from the rest of the world, brought about by the natural boundaries of the Amhara plateau, allowed the Ethiopian communities to find their own level, and develop their cultures, away from a constant exposure to external influences.

This isolation also made Ethiopia a haven for wildlife. More than 800 species of birds are found in the country, 26 of them exclusive to the area. And 103 species of mammals exist in Ethiopia, seven of them unique to the country.

It is here, too, that humankind — *homo sapiens* — first began its evolutionary origins as *Australopithecus afarensis*, the ancestors who walked erect through the Rift Valley of Ethiopia some 2½-million years ago.

It is significant that Ethiopian civilization — the eventual blending into an "Ethiopian" identity of the various peoples of the region — developed substantially in isolation from the evolution of other Civilizations in Europe, South Asia and East Asia. The name "Ethiopian" is itself, however, a Greek appellation meaning "burnt face", and by the time this name had been given, civilization in the area had already been developing for millennia. "What is clear ... is that 4,000 years ago, perhaps as a function of the divided nature of the Ethiopian topography, increasing linguistic and cultural specialization and separation had become the order of the day," Hancock, Pankhurst and Willetts noted in their excellent book, *Under Ethiopian Skies.*

It is not that Ethiopia developed in ignorance of the outside world; rather, its contact was selective and limited. Trade with the major Civilizations of antiquity, such as Constantinople and Rome or with Persia or Asia, and earlier with Egypt, was for the most part filtered through the coastal plains of Eritrea. Ethiopia provided myrrh to Egypt some 5,000 years ago, and some 4,500 years ago Egypt sought gums and resins — some of them important in the embalming process for Egyptian funerary customs — from Ethiopia. And although Eritrea, the "filter state", eventually became part of the broader Ethiopian Empire, it had experienced a different world.

And it is not that Ethiopian Civilizations lacked curiosity about the outside world. The Sabæan Kingdom, from whence Queen Makeda (the Queen of Sheba) came, almost certainly held territories which spanned the Red Sea from what is now Yemen into what is now the Tigré region of Ethiopia, well up the escarpment from Eritrea. And well before the Christian era, the Axumite Kingdom, based in what is now northern Ethiopia's Tigré province, had controlled the coastal plain and the port of Adulis. The Axumite Kingdom was a powerful trading state, strategically located on the seaway between Egypt and Persia, and well-placed for trade with the Arabian Peninsula and South Asia.

It was during the Axumite period that the Semitic language Ge'ez became commonly used. It was related to the Sabæan language of the Arabian Peninsula, not surprisingly. And from Ge'ez — or Ethiopic, still the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church — stemmed the Amarigna (Amharic), Tigrigna, Guragé and Harari (Adare) languages of modern Ethiopia.

Ge'ez script, based on a syllabary, is the only African language to have a unique form of writing, another factor which created a vacuum in which the Ethiopian peoples would develop their own views of the world. Amharic, with 33 consonants, each with seven different vowel variations, has 321 characters and 20 diphthong characters, and seven variations of the letter "b".

Language was to prove divisive as well as inclusive in the growing Ethiopia as Oromotic languages came into the Empire with the Oromotic peoples, and others. Language today remains one of the overriding points of division in the Ethiopian society. While the Empire was strong, the ruling group was able to impose a national *lingua franca* — Amharic — on the country. All successful multinational or multicultural societies have imposed a *lingua franca.* It has always been resented, but it has always been a key to the success of a complex political entity. India today could not function, firstly without English, secondly without Hindi. In the case of English (in India), it was the most acceptable option, because it did not favor one particular group or area, as Hindi obviously did. In Ethiopia, now without a unifying central government, linguistic differences highlight the cultural differences of the various nations within the state.

Within even the linguistic groups were further divisions. In the past two centuries, the rise of the Shoa Amhara saw a gradual absorption of the traditions of Shoa into the Empire as a whole, and *vice versa.* Today, the face of the Empire is no longer Shoan, as it was briefly under and after Menelik. It is truly "Ethiopian", blending the customs of all of the peoples. This evolution and blending came at a time when the country was becoming increasingly exposed to external (mainly Western) influences. So, as Ethiopia became codified as a nation-state in the modern sense, so were the tools of statecraft used to strengthen some of the Ethiopian methods and structures and the armed forces.

And yet of overriding cultural and structural significance to the State was the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, despite the fact that the Empire has always been home to substantial Muslim and animist populations, as well as to other Christian sects. It was the Ethiopian Church which became unique to the culture, although its origins were in the earliest Christian church, at Alexandria, Egypt, a link which survives to this day. The Muslims of Ethiopia could identify with the Muslims of Arabia, whereas Ethiopian Christians were limited in the outside forces with whom they could identify. Part of this was because, along with the development of unique languages for the area (and in this case, Ge'ez, the language of the church), the antiquity of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity ensured that a strong local set of traditions evolved.

It is not that Ethiopia developed in ignorance of the outside world; rather, its contact was selective and limited.

Religion and language set Ethiopia apart from the rest of Africa, too. Had it not been for the buffer zone of Sudan, Ethiopia may have developed more closely than it has done with Egypt, which until a few decades ago always provided the *Abuna* (Patriarch) for the Ethiopian Church.

The Church was one of the most significant pillars of Ethiopian society. It developed the only significant fixed constructions — monasteries and churches — of any importance for many years. So, in a sense, the fixed icons of Ethiopian society were those provided either by the church, or by the ancient stelæ (obelisks) of the Axumite ruins. The sense of oral history was extremely strong, and learning was centered around monasteries, just as, before Christianity, the stelæ of Axum were the history books of the age. In much of Ethiopian history, the monarchy was a mobile caravan which traced its way across the largely agricultural and feudal countryside. When it is realized that the legal condition of serfdom was only abolished on the statute books of Great Britain in the early 20th Century (but in reality with the earlier coming of the Industrial Revolution), and in reality in Russia after 1917, it is hardly surprising that Ethiopia continued as a largely agricultural-feudal society well into the late 19th Century.

It was only the military victories of the Shoa which, culminating in the accession of Emperor Menelik II in 1889, brought Ethiopia into the modern world. It took Menelik seven years to unite the disparate peoples into a force which could defeat a modern European army (the Italians) on the battlefield at Adwa in 1896. From that point, he began, with some success and with — for the first time — any continuity of diplomatic relations with the major powers (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Egypt), the process of "internationalizing" Ethiopia. He re-introduced a modern currency system to the country, for the first time with any real success since the Axumite Kingdom some 1,500 years before. And he modernized the Army.

Still, Ethiopia was a predominantly poor, agricultural country, with little infrastructure. The construction of Addis Ababa by Menelik was of paramount importance in creating a modern nation-state, but even so, in the absence of the massive investment required in infrastructure and education, the society and Army required a structure which would ensure unity, and productivity in food and other goods. For this reason, the society retained, longer than European states, its reliance on noble ranks and regional fiefdoms.

Emperor Haile Selassie, when he came to the Throne in 1930 after many years as Regent and two years as *Negus*, was already filled with the zeal to reform and modernize. He, unique among Ethiopian rulers for almost two millennia, had been exposed to the outside world, and had received as strong an education in Western culture and society as he had in Ethiopian traditions. And it was he who attempted to blend historically-respected traditions of society and military management into a 20th Century, international context. For this reason, ancient military titles, such as *meridazmatch, gerazmatch* and *dejazmatch*, are retained, not to interfere with modern practices, but as a reminder of Ethiopia's uniqueness. Indeed, unlike the aristocratic titles of military and governmental leadership in Europe — such as count, baron, etc. — the Ethiopian titles of *ras, meridazmatch* and *gerazmatch* retained their direct functional relevance well into the 20th Century. We have seen *rases* and *dejazmatches* fighting in traditional military capacities well into this Century; indeed into World War II and beyond.

When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, using modern equipment and extensive quantities of chemical weapons (mainly mustard gas, a blistering agent which had caused widespread death and injury on the Western Front during World War I), the Imperial Army arrayed to meet what was an overwhelming threat. Emperor Haile Selassie, in his autobiography, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress*, noted the traditional disposition of forces for the Battle of Maytchäw on March 29 to April 1, 1936 [*Mägabit* 20-23, 1928]:

"... We divided the strategic order [of battle], by which we were going into battle, into four groups, adding the troops collected from various offices. We arranged that one group be directly commanded and led by Ourselves and that the remaining three groups be led by three commanders, ie: by HH *Ras* Kassa, by HH *Ras* Seyum, and by *Ras* Getatchäw. The part commanded and led by Ourselves direct was divided as follows;

"At the front, the corps of the guard of honor under *Qägnazmatch* Mäkuriya Bant Yergu and his deputy *Gerazmatch* Kefle Ergätu.

"On the left, the corps of the guard of honor under *Gerazmatch* Abära Gezaw.

"On the right, the corps of palace servants and footmen under *Qägnazmatch* Bälhu Däggäfu.

"At the rear, the corps of the palace guards under *Dejazmatch* Adäfersäw ..."

Continued on Page Eight

Horn of Africa

Radicalization of the Horn of Africa Is Moving Quickly

The absence of widespread television and radio news coverage of the Horn of Africa — largely as a result of major power attention on other regions, such as the Kosovo crisis — has allowed a decline in the political stability of the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region to pass unnoticed. The region has not faced the present level of instability and actual conflict since the 1970s, and, to some extent, the situation is more fragile now.

Reports in late April and early May that Saudi-born businessman and terrorist leader Osama bin Laden had left his base in Afghanistan to re-settle in Somalia proved incorrect. However, what was the case was the fact that the bin Laden organization — which itself has ties into the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) — *was* establishing major new bases in Somalia.

In the same timeframe, Sudanese leader General Hassan al-Bashir and Eritrean EPLF leader Isayas Afewerke signed an accord which may prove more stable than the memorandum of understanding between the Sudanese and EPLF foreign ministers in November last year. Much of the mediation between the two was the work of Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi. Several African leaders have recently expressed their concern to *Negarit* over the fact that Qadhafi, now freed from some of the embargoes over the Pan Am 103 bombing, has the ability once again to pursue a radical agenda.

He has already begun to flex his muscles in supporting a radical agenda with the EPLF and Sudan and, reportedly, throwing in support for ultra-radical elements in Somalia with the support of the EPLF in Asmara. Qadhafi, who made promises of "good behavior" if he could be released from the UN embargoes, has now made it clear that he will return to his radical activities with a vengeance, particularly repaying the moderate states who had opposed him.

The early May accord between Sudan and the EPLF also comes as something of a shock to Ethiopia, whose TPLF-dominated Meles administration had also recently signed an accord with Sudan. The subsequent Isayas-Bashir treaty has made it clear that the coalition working against Ethiopian unity has retained its momentum.

Ethiopia's Meles administration had felt that it could break Sudanese support away from Eritrea (which after all has had a fractious relationship with Sudan since the creation of the Eritrean state) by going directly to Khartoum. It also felt that it could seek an accommodation directly with Sudan's principal strategic sponsor, Iran, by inviting it to mediate the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute. Not only did the attempts to woo the radical states fail, the move served to jolt United States, Israeli and European leaders.

There has been the feeling in Ethiopian leadership circles that, since the decline in Washington-Asmara relations, the US really had no option but to support Addis Ababa. US politicians are now saying that while the interests of the United States do, indeed, lie with Ethiopia as the heartland power of the Horn of Africa, they must question *who* they support in Addis Ababa. So the principal centrality of Ethiopia to Western interests in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea is acknowledged, but the matter of who should control Ethiopia is now being debated.

For the first time since the 1991 Western acceptance of the TPLF control of Ethiopia — only agreed because of Western preoccupation with the Gulf War and Soviet collapse — there is serious debate about whether the US can continue supporting Meles. The "new generation" African leader has already become passé. ★

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ነፃነት ከየት ወዴት?

ነፃነት እጅግ ብርቅ ድንቅ ቃል ነው። የነፃነትን ዋጋ ለመተመን መለኪያ ሚዛንም የለው። በቋንቋም ለመግለጽ አስቸጋሪ ነው። እንዲሁ ንጹድ ክቡር ብለን እንሠይመውና እናቆየው። ነፃነት ስንል የሰው ልጅ በተፈጥሮ ባሕርዩ ሊኖረው ሊያገኘው ሊይዘው የሚገባ እጅግ መሠረታዊ መብት ነው። ነፃነት የሌለው ሕዝብ ካሉት በታች ከሞቱት በላይ በሞትና በሕይወት መካከል ያለ የቄንቅ የጋርና የጥብ ሕይወት የሚኖር ነው።

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ነፃነት በልመና ነፃነት በሽምግልና በምልጃ ነፃነት በስጦታ የሚጠይቁትም የሚያገኙትም አይደለም። እያንዳንዱ ነፍስ ለነፃነቱ መጮህ መከራከር እምቢ አሻፈረኝ ማለት የተፈጥሮአዊ ባሕርይ ግዴታው ነው። ነፃነት ከሌለ ሰብአዊ ሕይወት የለም። ያለ ነፃነት መኖር ለሰው ልጆች የቁም ሞት ነው። የቁም ሞት ደግሞ የእንስሳት ባሕርይ ነው። በባለቤቱ በጎ ፈቃድና ችሮታ ፍላጎትና ምኞት ብቻ የሚኖሩ የሚታዘዙ የሚሠሩ የሚወድቁ የሚጣሉ የሚወረወሩ በራሳቸው ባሕርይ እምነትና ፍላጎት የማይንቀሳቀሱ ናቸው። ይህን የሚያደርግ ነው የነፃነት ቀበኛ የነፃነት ወንበዴ የነፃነት ቀማኛ በጥቅሉ ጠላት ማለት እኒህን ተግባራት በሰዎች በሕዝብ ላይ የሚፈጽም የሚያደርግ ነው።

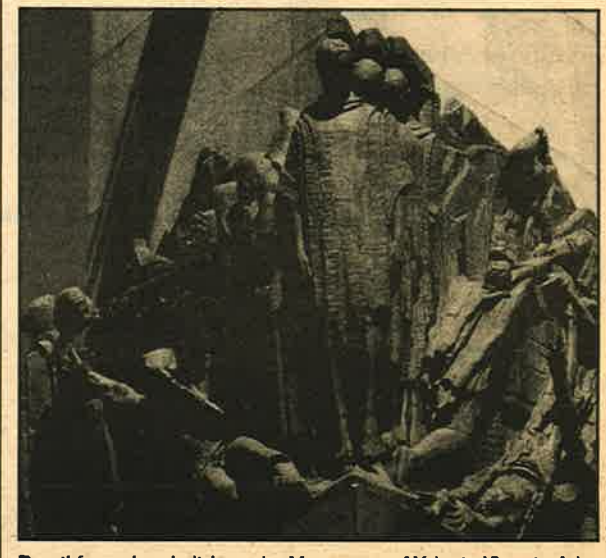
የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ነፃነቱን የሚፈታተኑትን ሁሉ አሳፍሮ የመለሰ ደሙን ለነፃነቱ ያፈሰሰ አጥንቱን የከሰከሰም ነው። ታሪክ ጀግና ብሎታል። አሞካሽቶታል። እጅግ ከፍ ከፍ አድርጎታል። ከሚታወቅባቸው ሁነቶች አንዱ በዚሁ ጳመት ሚያዚያ ሃያ ሰባት ቀን ያከበርነው የድል ቀን ነው። ይህም ዕለት የኢትዮጵያን ሕዝብ በሙሉ ገብረ ማርያም የለ ወልደ ማርያም ሁሉንም ሲያወሳው ይሰማል። ይገኛል። ጠላትን ድል እንደ ማድረግ ምን የሚያስደስት ነገር ከቶ አለ? መብትን የሚገፍ አንገቱን በሠይፍ ደረቱን በሰደፍ ብሎ ጥሎ ማሸነፍ ምንኛ የደስታ ደስታ ነው። ያን ቀን ማፍቀርና ማክበር የነፃነት አፍቃሪ ሕዝብ ተግባር ነው። ተድላ ደስታውም ነው።

ሚያዚያ ሃያ ሰባት በነፃነት ቀንነቱ ሲታሰብ ሲዘከር ጠላት ሸሽቶ ተሸነፈ። ተባረረ። ነፃነት ተከበረ በማለት ነው። ነፃነት ማግኘት ማለት ከነዊ ገዥ ወደ ጥቁር አምባገነን መሸጋገር አይደለም። ይህማ ጉዳዩን ማደነጋገር ነው። አይሆንምም። ጥቁር ለጥቁር ቢገፋተር ጥርስ አይሰበር። ማለት ፈጽሞ አይቻልም። ባርነትን በቅጥር፤ ነፃነትን በአስተዳደር ማደነጋገር ነው።

ከሚያዚያ ሃያ ሰባት ቀን የምንማረው የምንዘከረው ደግሞም የምናከብረው በነፃነት ቀንነቱ ነው። ለነፃነት የተሠዉ ኢትዮጵያውያን/ት ጀግኖችን እናስባለን። እኛም ጳርማቸውን አንስተን የነፃነት ቃል ኪዳናችንን እናድሳለን። ያልገባን እንገባለን። ያገር የወገን ጠላትን ታጥቀን እንዋጋለን። በነፃነት የኖረ ያደገና የሸመገለ ሕዝብ ያለ ነፃነት ሊኖር ከቶ አይችልም። ስለ የሚያዚያ ሃያ ሰባት ቀን በጳል አከባበር መጠነኛ ትረካ ተነሥ ከተሰኘው መጽሐፍ የሚከተለውን እናሠፍራለን።

«ኢትዮጵያ ከኢጣሊያን ወረራ በጀግኖቿ ነፃ ከወጣችና ጠላቶቿን ድል አድርጋ የነፃነቷን ጳርማ ሰንደቅ ጳላማዋን ጥር 12 ቀን 1933 ጳ. ም. ንጉሠ ነገሥቷ ቀዳማዊ ኃይለ ሥላሴ ንጉሠ ነገሥት ዘኢትዮጵያ ኦሜድላ ላይ ሰቀሉ። ከዚያም ከሱዳን የጀመሩትን ጉዞ በጎኻም አድርገው አዲስ አበባ ሚያዚያ 27 ቀን 1933 ጳ. ም. መናገሻ ከተማቸው የኢትዮጵያ ርዕሰ ከተማ አዲስ አበባ ሲገቡ የኢትዮጵያን ሰንደቅ ጳላማ በሰንደቁ ላይ አወጡት። ነፃነት ተበሠረ ጠላትም ተባረረ። ለመላው የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ነፃነቱ በአዋጅ ተነገረ። ጀግናውም በደስታ በወኔ ከወዲያ ወዲህ በመንግለል ወንዱ አካኪ ዘራፍ እያለ ፎከረ። ሴቱ በዕልልታ ወንዱ በሆታ ዕለቱን አከበረ። ከዚያን ጊዜ ጀምሮ በየጳመቱ ይህ በጳል ሲከበር ኖረ። ነገር ግን በጉልበቱ በአምባገነንነቱ በማን አለብኝነቱ የታወቀው ደርግ ሲመጣ ይህን ቀን ከኢትዮጵያ ጀግናና ሕዝብ ነጥሎ የእንግሊዝ ጦር ከምሥራቅ አፍሪቃ በተለይም በጂኔራል ካኒንግሃም የሚመራው ጦር መጋቢት 28 ቀን ቀደም ብሎ አዲስ አበባ ገብቶ ነበር። በንጉሠ ነገሥቱ ላይ ያለውን ቂም በቀል የተወጣው መስሎት ከትክክለኛው ቋን አንስቶ የእንግሊዝ ጦር የገባበትን ቀን እንዲከበር አደረገ። ደርግ ይህን ብቻ አልነበረም ያደረገው። በዚሁ አደባባይ የነበሩትን ሐውልቶች ማንነት በጠረባና በጠረጋ በመለወጥ ታሪኩንም ፍቆታል።» በዚህ መልኩ ከቆየ በኋላ ወደ ጥንተ ቀኑ በኢትዮጵያ አርበኞች ማኅበር ተጋድሎ ትክክለኛውን ቀን እንዲይዝ ተደርጓል።

ይህ ቀን ጣሊያንን ያህል ወራሪ ኃይል ያሸነፍንበት አገራችንን ከጠላት ያስለቀቅንበት ልዩ የጀግንነት መታሰቢያ ቀናችን ነው። ነፃነት በምንም ጳይነት ዋጋ የማይሸጡትና የማይለውጡት ብቸኛ የኢትዮጵያውያን/ት ሁሉ ልዩ ሀብትና ንብረት ነው። ከልማዳዊ ነፃነት ወደ ተግባራዊ ነፃነት ሕዝቡ መረማመዱን መቀጠል የጀግንነት ጳርማው ነው። በነፃነት ስም ባርነት፤ ባንድነት ስም ልዩነት መቆም አለበት። ነፃነት ለሁሉም ዜጋ የብሔራዊ መብቱና ክብሩ መታወቂያም ነው



Detail from the obelisk — the Monument of Yekatit 12 — in Addis Ababa dedicated to those Ethiopians who died for the country's freedom in the wars to expel the Italian invaders.

Jailing Opposition Chiefs Called "an Affront to Democracy and Unity"

The Ethiopian Crown Council on April 7 condemned the minority administration in Addis Ababa for quietly sentencing opposition leaders to long terms of imprisonment in a move which the Council said "betrays all Ethiopians who came together in support of national unity during the recent and ongoing crisis".

The Meles Zenawi administration on April 3 had sentenced six leaders of the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO) to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to 20 years. The sentences were not publicized by the Meles administration, but only came to light as a result of reporting by independent journals. The administration claimed that the group was attempting to organize a terrorist group in Semen Shoa, an allegation which was never substantiated.

The Federal High Court Second Criminal Division said that the "criminal activities" occurred in Debre Berhan prison and in Asagir Woreda district. The journal *Genanaw* said that the convicted were: Major Mekre Tekle W. Tsadik (20 years); Capt. Mekre Selassie W. Mariam (18 years); *Ato* (Mr) Wondayehu Kassa (six years); *Ato* Ali Idris (five years); *Ato* Girma Enqo Selassie (three years); *Wozeiro* (Mrs) Asegedech (three years).

"These opposition leaders committed no crimes other than to speak out for democracy and for the unity of Ethiopia," Crown Council President, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, said today. "It is unbelievable that this could happen after the Amharas and AAPO, like other Ethiopians, put aside their differences with the Meles administration in order to defend Ethiopia against military aggression. Indeed, it is ironic that the bulk of the casualties in this war between Meles Zenawi and Eritrean leader Isayas Afewerke were Amhara and Oromo peoples, the very groups now facing major oppression by the Meles administration."

"AAPO, during the darkest hours of the conflict, agreed to put aside differences with Meles for the sake of national unity. Now that the crisis appears to have subsided, Meles has shown once again that he wishes to pursue his divide-and-rule policies of ethnic separatism in Ethiopia."

Prince Ermias continued: "Today it is the Amhara leaders who are being unjustly imprisoned. But Oromo leaders and others are also being held or persecuted for their opposition to the Meles administration. This can only, once again, weaken the Ethiopian nation."

"This latest action shows how the courts of Ethiopia are completely tied to the minority clique which is ruling the country, and shows that Ethiopians, who have suffered so much in recent months, have nothing to look forward to."

"We call on the international community to support the Ethiopian people in demanding the release of these latest political prisoners in our homeland, and for the release of those who have been suffering in prison for some time for their political beliefs."

Prince Ermias said that the action by the Meles administration, when seen in conjunction with the recent overtures toward Iran and Sudan, both radical states, showed that Ethiopia was being dragged into an anti-Western stance which would severely damage inward investment and future trade and security relations.

"The Meles administration asked that all Ethiopians put aside their differences during the conflict. We all did this. Then, when the fighting died down, Meles once again turned on Ethiopians who oppose his policies. Is this what Ethiopia can now look forward to?" ★

Italy's Ongoing Role in Ethiopian Affairs Questioned

The Italian Government has maintained a strong interest in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war since mid-1998, *Negarit* has learned, with the Italian leadership taking a strongly pro-Eritrean position despite claims from Rome that an impartial policy would be followed. The "highest levels" of the Italian Government have briefed African leaders recently to the effect that EPLF leader Isayas Afewerke was "intelligent and reasonable", but that the Ethiopian leadership could not be trusted.

Despite Ethiopia's double defeat of Italy in 1896 and 1941, the late Emperor Haile Selassie I strove to maintain a workable relationship with Rome. He is seen here during his last State visit to Italy.

"There appears to be no viable diplomatic link between Addis and Rome today," one senior African leader told *Negarit*. ★

Crown Calls Invitation For Iran to Mediate War "a Grave Mistake"

The Ethiopian Crown Council issued a statement at the end of March which said that it was "a grave mistake" for Ethiopia to call on Iran to help mediate the current conflict between Addis Ababa and Asmara. "It can only lead to grave consequences for the future unity and stability of Ethiopia," Crown Council President Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie said.

Prince Ermias was commenting on Iranian news agency reports which said that Ethiopian Council of People's Representatives Speaker Dawit Yohanes had invited Iranian mediation efforts to resolve the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Ethiopian Speaker had apparently made the remarks during a meeting in Addis Ababa with Iranian Ambassador Hussein Rajabi.

"All attempts at external mediation have thus far failed," Prince Ermias said, "and now it has been suggested that Iran, which has been actively attempting to influence events in the Horn of Africa since 1979, should be invited into our affairs. This is untenable."

"The Ethiopian Crown Council has, since the beginning of this conflict urged both sides to consider mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms which stay within the family of Ethiopic-speaking peoples. This has not yet even been attempted, and now Speaker Yohanes has apparently suggested inviting in a country which has made no secret of its wish to radicalize our region."

"This does not mean that Ethiopia should treat Iran as an enemy, but it is clear that Iran is not a suitable candidate for a role in mediating the conflict."

Prince Ermias continued: "The invitation for Iran to mediate in our problem is playing into the hands of the radicals, the same radicals who wish to see Ethiopia alienated from the main body of the world's trading nations; the same radicals who wish to see Ethiopia dis-united and even dismembered."

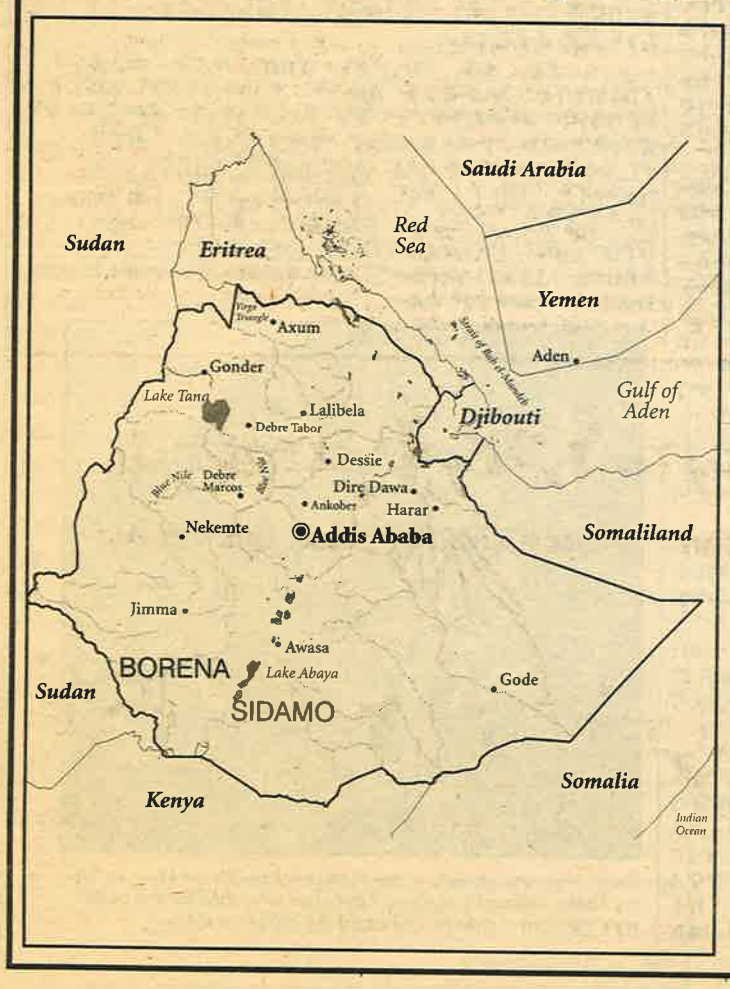
"Iran has been the major ally of Sudanese radical leaders such as Dr Hassan al-Turabi, who has advocated the dismemberment of Ethiopia even in recent months. Iran and Sudan have gone hand-in-hand in promoting radical religious politics in Africa, posing a major threat not only to moderate Ethiopian Muslims, but to moderate Muslim governments throughout Africa and the Middle East."

"We have seen that in every arena in which Iran has become involved in recent years that religious polarization occurs. We do not want that for Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, religious tolerance and freedom — and an absence of religious radicalism — have been our strength."

The Council President said that the ill-considered statement by Speaker Yohanes was typical of the drift and lack of a sense of national unity which has marked the current political era in Ethiopia.

"Ethiopia and the greater family of Ethiopic-speaking peoples must rally around symbols of unity, and build a sense of common purpose, ending conflict through mutual respect and a greater sense of Ethiopianness. Ethiopian common objectives need not in any way interfere with the regional, ethnic or religious differences in our community. But we need to retain a strong sense of unity in the face of external threats which are mounting daily." ★

Fighting in Borena and Sidama Shows That Ethnic Cleansing is Still Ongoing in Meles' Ethiopia



THE MELES Zenawi administration was attempting to cover up major fighting in the Borena and Sidama ethnic communities in the southern part of Ethiopia, according to a report released by the Crown Council of Ethiopia this month. According to reports reaching the Crown Council, the ongoing clashes have already claimed hundreds of lives and caused the displacement of thousands of Ethiopians in the southern region of the country.

"The clashes are the direct result of the policies of ethnic separatism — an Ethiopian *apartheid* — being pursued by the Meles administration," a spokesman for the Council said. "The clashes come on top of the fighting which took place in July last year between the Gedio and Gujji peoples in Southern Ethiopia. More than 3,000 people died in that conflict. The only response by the Meles administration to that tragedy was to arrest the journalists who went to report on it."

The Crown Council spokesman said that Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, the Council President, and Prince Bekere Fikre-Selassie, the Viceroy, had both expressed their distress at the current fighting and extended their condolences to the victims.

"The people of Ethiopia united and refrained from questioning the Meles policies while the country was engulfed in the war with Eritrea. Now, when the fighting subsides, the Meles administration has resumed its divide-and-rule policies at home, destroying the lives and futures of the Ethiopian people."

"Only a policy of national unity will help restore Ethiopian peace and prosperity," the spokesman said. ★

Enderassé Prince Bekere Fikre-Selassie: distressed over conflict.

Concern For Orthodox Bloc

The Crown Council this month received several messages expressing concern that the Balkan war was dividing the Christian world in Orthodox and non-Orthodox *blocs*. A spokesman for the Council said that Ethiopians needed to re-emphasize their traditional religious tolerance. ★

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See Page Seven.

The War

Critics Ask: "Unless Policies Change, Can Peace Ever Return?"

The war between Ethiopia and the EPLF administration in Asmara, Eritrea, had already begun to spill over into Somalia by early May 1999. Eritrean money and agitation had also begun fuelling armed Ethiopian separatist groups inside and outside the country, spurring fighting to distract Ethiopian forces [*see story* on Sidamo and Borena, page six.]

Both principal contestants in the war had claimed low defense budgets and limited available funds, but weapons acquisition has continued virtually non-stop since June 1998, with no end in sight. Moreover, the weapons acquisitions include sophisticated combat aircraft still well beyond the training level of most of the air force personnel in either force.

A May 7, 1999, report by Agence France Presse noted: "Despite official denials, Eritrea is trying to destabilize Ethiopia and draw its troops away from the border by sending Ethiopian rebels to infiltrate the east of the country, from Somalia. It is also sending huge quantities of arms, according to the sources, some for use by the rebels and some by Somali factions, as Ethiopia arms their rivals."

Ethiopian forces are now fighting on a number of fronts, including the Somali Gedo region, combating Ethiopian Islamist guerrillas of the *al-Itihad al-Islam* movement. The Eritrean moves to arm Somali movements flies directly in the face of an April 29 UN Security Council call for all UN members to comply with the 1992 embargo on arms shipments into Somalia.

And despite Eritrea's claims that it needs all the arms help it can get for itself, the Isayas administration is shipping massive stocks of small arms and ordnance by air and sea to the Mogadishu warlord, Mohamed Hussein Aideed, who is also — like his father who preceded him — a favored recipient of Iranian and Sudanese aid.

Given the recent *rapprochement* between Sudan and the Isayas leadership, there can be no doubting now the Iran-Sudan-Eritrea-Somali linkage beginning to encircle and threaten Ethiopia. More than this, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which had been languishing because Oromos had basically foresaken the radically marxist leadership, has received a new lease on life from the Eritrean financial and weapons support, and once again poses a major threat to Ethiopian stability.

As well, Isayas continues to arm the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Evidence of the coordinated nature of the Eritrean actions has come with the arrival of Oromo (OLF) fighters with weapons on an Eritrean ship which docked at Merca, a port in southern Somalia controlled by Aideed.

These particular forces came with heavy weapons: armored personnel carriers, heavy artillery, anti-aircraft guns, thousands of small arms and many tonnes of ammunition. The backing was also clear: 11 Eritrean officers accompanied the OLF troops.

Ethiopia has also been attempting to outflank this by supplying Aideed's opponents, particularly the Rahanwein Resistance Army (fighting in and around the south-central town of Baidoa), the United Somali Congress/Patriotic Movement in central Somalia, and the faction of Hussein Haji Bod in the north of Mogadishu.

The Ethiopian Meles administration, meanwhile, is also fighting to retain credibility at home. It has failed to dislodge the Eritrean forces from the Yirga Triangle, despite the massive difference in the populations of the two combatants and the proportionately greater resources available to Ethiopia. And the EPLF's Isayas has maintained the upper hand in the political war waged for international support.

The May 16 dawn raid by Ethiopian aircraft on the Eritrean port city of Massawa — damaging a naval base, an oil depot and the port — was, however, not part of the "real" war against Isayas. It was, according to Addis sources, a move to distract Ethiopian public opinion from the death in the US of the most visible of his critics, Professor Asrat Woldeyes (see page one), who died directly as a result of the Meles administration's imprisonment and ill-treatment of him.

Everything has gone wrong for Meles: he has failed to unify the country to defeat a tiny invader; he conducts a war in part to distract from the death of a much-loved dissident whose death he caused; and he now faces strategic encirclement from an increasingly strong coalition of enemies. Simply put, how long will his colleagues support him? ★

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በእያንዳንዱ ኢትዮጵያዊ አፍሪቃዊና ነፃነት ወዳድ ለሆነው ሕዝብ ሁሉ የጻድዋ ድል የነፃነት ገድሉ ነው። ይህ ገድል በእያንዳንዱ ልቡና ወይም አእምሮ ተከትቦ ከትውልድ ወደ ትውልድ ሲተላለፍ የሚኖር ነው። የጻድዋን በጻል መታሰቢያ ስናከብር የኢትዮጵያዊ ደም ሁሉ የሚያፈርስበት ጥቃትን የሚያስታውስበት ወርና ዕለት ነው። ምክንያቱም በጠላት ላይ ከንድ ማንላትን የግድ የሚልበት ስለሆነ ነው። ኢትዮጵያ የሦስት ሺህ የነፃነት ዘመናት ያስቆጠረችው ይህን በማድረጓ ነው።

ይህን የነፃነት ታምር የሰማ አፍሪቃዊ ጆሮ ገድሉን ያነበበ አፍሪቃዊ ጻይን ጆሮ በመስማት አይሞላም ጻይንም በማየት ወልቆ አይወጣም ብሎ አልተቀመጠም። ጆሮ ለልብ ልብ ለራስ ራስ ለመላ ሕዋሳት በማዳረስ በጠላት ላይ እንዲመለከቱና እንዲነሡ ያወጀበት ስማ ተስማማ ያሰኘበት ገድል ነው። ይህ ኢትዮጵያ ተወልዶ ያደገና የተጻፈ ገድል ለአፍሪቃዊ ነፃነቱን ለቅኝ ገዥዎቹ ደግሞ ሞታቸውንና ሽንፈታቸውን ነጋሪት ያስነሠመበት ድምጽ ነበር። የአፍሪቃውያን ነፃነት ምንጩና ፍቱንነቱ የተመሠከረው አዳኝነቱ የተረጋገጠው በጻድዋው የድል ገድል ነበር። የጻድዋ ድል ለአፍሪቃውያን ሁሉ የነፃነት ከትባት ሆኖ አገልግሏል።

ይህ በጻል ሲከበር የመላው የአፍሪቃ ሕዝብ ሁሉ የነፃነት ጻርማና ጻርጻያ ሆኖ ነው የሚታሰበው። ይህን ከባርነት ከቅኝ ተገዥነት በሽታ ማለት «ከባርያ ወሌጌዎን» የሚያስለቅቅ ፍቱን ኢትዮጵያዊ የነፃነት ጠልሰም ነው። የጻድዋ ገድል የተጻፈው በኢትዮጵያውያን ጀግኖች አጥንታቸው ብራና ደማቸው ቀለም ሆኖ ነው። ይህ ገድል ሲነበብ አጋንንት የሆኑት ቅኝ ገዥዎች ለቀቅን ለቀቅን በማለት የሚያስርህ በመሆኑ አፍሪቃውያን ከዚህ በሽታቸው ተፈውሰውበታል። ድነውበታል። ነፃነታቸውን አግኝተውበታል። ይህን ገድል ለጻፉ ላጻፉ ለደረሱ ላስተማሩ ሁሉ የነፃነት ጻየር የሚተነፍሰው ሕዝብ በሙሉ ባለውለታቸው ነው። ትውልድም ታሪክም ለዘለዓለም ሲያስታውሳቸውና ሲያመሠግናቸው ይኖራል።

ከዚህ ላይ ግን ማስታወስ የሚያስፈልገው ነገር ቢኖር ቅኝ አገዛዝ ሲጠፋ «የዕጅ አዙር ቅኝ አገዛዝ » መከሠቱ ነው። ይህ ደግሞ ከሕዝቡ መካከል በምርጫ ያለበለዚያም በጡጫ ከሥልጣን ላይ የወጡት ሰዎችን የሚያጠቃ በሽታ ሆኖ ይታያል። በበሽታው የተጠቁት መልሰው መላልሰው በሕዝቡ ለማጋባትም ሆነ ለማስተላለፍ የሚያደርጉት ሙከራ ነፃ በወጣው ዝባቸው ላይ ነው። የዚህም መድኃኒቱ በበሽታው የተጠቁትን ሕዝቡ መልሶ ውሽባ በማስገባት መከላከል ይኖርበታል። ይህ ካልሆነ የዳነውን መልሶ በሽተኛ ማስደረግ ነው

እንግዲህ ይህ እንዳይሆን በሽታው እንዳይመለስ አደራውና ግዴታው የወደቀው በተማሩት ባወቁት ለሕዝብ አለኝታና ደጀን በሆኑት ምሁራን ላይ ነው። ምሁራኑም ለሕዝባቸው ዘብ መቆም ይጠበቅባቸዋል። ምሁር የሚለውን ቃል ኢትዮጵያውያን ባለቅኔዎች እንዲህ ሲሉ ያትቱታል። መምህራኑ ኮኑ በበደወሉ፤ ፊደላተ ዘጉለቍ ዙሉ።» ትርጉሙ ባዊሩ ፊደል የቆጠረ ሁሉ በየቦታው አስተማሪ ሆኗል ማለት ነው። ቃሉ ምፀት ነው። አሽሙር አነጋገር ነው። እቤቱታም ነው። ፊደል ማወቅ የእንግልጣር ቋንቋ አስደፍቆ መናገር መጻፍ ማንበብ ኮምፒውተር መነቅነቅ በኢንተርኔት ገብቶ መዝለቅ የሆነውን ያልሆነውን መለቅለቅ አያደርግም ሊቅ። መማር ራስን ለወገን ማላደር። የራስን መብለጥለጥ በወገን ጥቅም መለወጥ፤ የራስን ክብር ለወገን ፍቅር ማስረከብን ይጠይቃል። ማለት ነው ሲሉ ባለቅኔዎች ትዝብታቸውን ኃዘናቸውን አቤቱታቸውን በምጸት በቃል አጋኖ ገልጠውታል።

ኢትዮጵያ አንድ ናት ሕዝቧም አንድ ነው። «ኢትዮጵያዊ ጠይምነቱን ነብር ዝንጉርጉርነቱን አይለውጥም» ሲባል ሠርገኛ ጤፍን መለየት ፀጉርን ቆጥሮ ይህን ያህል ነው ብሎ ማለት እንደማይቻል ሁሉ ኢትዮጵያዊውንም ለመለየት አንተ እንዲህ ነህ አንቺ እንዲያ ነሽ ብሎ ለመመዝገብ መሞከር ሕፃንን በተወለደበት ቀን ወደ ሱቅ ዕቃ ገዝቶ እንዲመጣ እንደ ማዘዝ ነው።

እንግዲህ ኢትዮጵያዊ ጠይም የቀይ ዳማ ቀይ እየተባለ ከሚታወቅበት መልኩ ውጭ የተጻውጻ ስምም ሆነ ቅጽል ሊሠጡት የማይቻል ነው። ከዚህ ላይ የተማረ ይግደለኝ ሳይሆን የተማረ ይፍረደኝ የሚያሰኘው። የተማረ ቢሳሳት ይፀፀታል። አውቆ ይታረማል። ራሱን ለንስሐ ያዘጋጃል። ተብሎ ይታመናል። ያልተማረ ግን ቢያጠፋ በድርጊቱ ይገፋ እንዲሉ ነው።

የጻድዋ ገድል ተረካቢዎች ሆይ! የጻድዋን ድል ያበቀለ ዝናም ዛሬ የለም። ሰማዩ ጠርቷል። ዳመናውም ጻይታይም። ዝናም ያለ ዳመና አይጣንምና ነው። ያን ዝናም ለማምጣት ዳመናውን ማስገኘት ዳመና ካለ ዝናም ይኖራል። ዝናም ካለ የተዘራው ይበቅላል። የበቀለው ያድጋል ያብባል ያፈራል እንደገናም ተዘርቶ ይበቅላል። ይህን ኢትዮጵ ያዊ የሆነ የታሪክ የባሕል የገድል ዝናም ሕዝቡ ይፈልገዋል። ሕዝቡም ብቻ ሳይሆን እንስሳቱ አራዊቱ ዕፀዋቱ ተራራው ሸለቆው ወንዙ ባሕሩ ዝናም ይሻል። ተራራውን ሸለቆውን የሚያለመልመው ዝናሙ ነው። ዘመኑን ዘመነ ምሕረት የሚያሰኘውም ዝናም የኖረ የጣለ እንደሆነ ነው። ያም ዝናም ጠለ በረከት ይሠጣል። ያ የድል ባለቤት በዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ላይ የነበር የዋለና ያደረ ግርማ ሞገስ ጎብተ መንፈስ ቅዱስ ዛሬስ? ዛሬላ? የት አለ? የት ይሆን? ያ አንበሳ ተክኩላ ቀበሮ ጦጣ ዝንጆሮ የሚሸሹ የሚጠፉ ሲያገሣ የት ነው? ያ የኢትዮጵያ ጻርማ የኢትዮጵያ ሰንደቅ ጻላማ «ተከተል አለቃህን ተመልከት ጻርማህን።» የተባለለት የት? ወዴት ነው?

የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ሆይ! አዲስ መንገድ ጠረግህ ሄድህ ወረድህ ወጣህ። ስንቅህን ጨረስህ። ልጅህን ገበርህ። ራስህ ብቻ ቀረህ። ያንተም ጽጣ እስኪወጣ ነገ ከነገ ወዲያ ይምጣ? አታውቀውም። ታሪክህ ነፃ ሕዝብ ነህ ብሎ ይመሠክርልሃል። ነፃነት ከእንድነት ከማንነት ከዕኩልነት ከአገርህ ሉጻላዊነት ጋር ባንድ ላይ ሲገመድ ጠላት አይበጥሰውም። ጉድጓድ የገባን ጎትቶ ያወጣል። የጠላትን ዕጅ እግር ጠፍሮ ያሥራል። ስለዚህ የሦስት ሺህ ዘመን ታሪክህን እጅግ የምትኮራበት የማንነትህም መታወቂያ ነው። አሁንም ወደ ጥንተ ታሪክህና ወደ መለያህ ጻርማህ ተመለስ። ያለፉት ጻመታት የማያልፍ ትምህርት ጠጥተውናል የማንም ኢትዮጵያዊ ሀብት ንብረት ጻርማና ኩራት የክብርና የሉጻላዊነት መግለጫው ዘውድ ነው። ዘውድ ለእንድነት ሙሻዘር ነው። ዘውድ የኢትዮጵ ያውያን ሁሉ የግል ብሔራዊ ሀብት ነው። በሦስት ሺህ ጻመት ዘመናቱ ዘውድ ጠንካራነቱን አስመስከሯል። የጻድዋ ድል የኢትዮጵያ ዘውድ ገድል ነው። የአውሮጳን ኃይል ሠብሮ የመለሠ የኢትዮጵያ ዘውድ ነው። ለዳግማዊ ምኒልክና ለኢትዮጵ ያውያን ጀግኖች መርጎ ጎይልና ግርማ የሠጣቸው ዘውድ ነው። ለኢትዮጵያ ሠላም ፍቅር እንድነት ብልጽግና ልማት ነፃነትና ሉጻላዊነት ራሱ ዘውድ ነው።

ዘውድ የተለየባቸው ዘመናት የእልቂት የእርስ በርስ መጠፋፋት ዘመናት ናቸው። እንግዲህ የጻድዋ ድል የኃይል ምንጩ ዘውድ ለመሆኑ ታሪክ ይመረምሯል። ነፃነትን ከዘውድ ዘውድን ከነፃነት አይቻልም መለያየት። የሁለቱም እንድነት ያንድ ሣንቲም ገጽታዎች ናቸው። ስለዚህ የጻድዋ ድል የዘውድ ገድል።

Illustration: Ethiopians under Emperor Menelik II prepare for the Battle of Adwa.

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Editorial: Freedom Past and Future

Continued from Page Four

IT IS NOT FREEDOM to move from subjugation at the hands of another race to subjugation by one's own race. This is tantamount to confusing the issue. By whatever name one calls it, subjugation is a basic denial of human freedoms.

On May 5, we collectively celebrate the "belt of freedom" [an Amharic expression conjuring the image of the circle of freedom which binds the community]. We remember our martyrs. We take their cause and renew our pledge to continue their tradition to fight for our freedom. Those who are outside are asked to join in the wider circle. We fight those who come to destroy our country, our traditions and our way of life. A people who, since childhood, have known freedom as a free generation cannot be expected to live without freedom. It is appropriate to quote a passage from a book which commemorates Liberation Day, May 5:

"Ethiopia, having defeated the Italian invasion, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I was able to once again raise the national flag as confirmation of Ethiopian sovereignty at Omedla on January 19, 1941. After that, he [Emperor Haile Selassie] continued his journey from Sudan through Gojjam and entered Addis Ababa on May 5, 1941."

"When His Majesty entered Addis Ababa he was able to hoist the national flag in the capital city. It was then announced to the entire population. People came out to celebrate the heroes in songs and praises as is customary. Women stood side by side with men on that day. It has been celebrated every year since."

"It is ironic that the fascist regime of the *Dergue* was the first to cancel this date because it believed it was revenging against the Emperor. The *Dergue* instead chose to celebrate May 6 to commemorate the encampment of British forces under General Cunningham in Addis Ababa. This was not the only crime the *Dergue* committed. It removed statues and symbols of the era and replaced them with the marxist symbols of the hammer and sickle."

"However, it was through the diligent insistence of the Patriotic Association of Ethiopia that finally the dates were changed once again to reflect the original."

This day is the day that Ethiopia was able to overcome the fascist invading forces and regain her freedom. Freedom is a priceless reward that Ethiopians will not exchange for anything less.

The Ethiopian people must now move forward from their heritage of freedom to ensure that it becomes a continuing reality and legacy for our people. We must stop slavery in the name of freedom and division in the name of unity. Freedom for every Ethiopian, irrespective of which part of the country they come from, must be a fundamental national right, its mark of distinction and part of its national legacy. ★

The monument of Yekatit 12, celebrating the contribution to Ethiopian freedom of those who died expelling the fascist invasion.

Crown Scholarship Program Progressing and Expanding

The Crown Council of Ethiopia's program of scholarships, being offered to Ethiopian students to study at Ambassador International University in Texas, in the United States, has captured the imagination of the Ethiopian community, and the Council has been overwhelmed by the high volume and high quality of responses from the community.

The 15 scholarships, 10 for Ethiopians from the homeland and five for Ethiopians from the diaspora, are valued at US$1.2-million. Applications are now being considered in the following disciplines:

- Agricultural management;
- Engineering;
- Water resource management;
- Computer sciences;
- Communications; and
- Business.

The scholarships will be awarded in the name of the charity, the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopia's Children. The University has referred all Ethiopian applications for scholarships to the Crown Council and the Charity.

Applicants will need to apply directly to the Crown Council, which is managing the process for Ethiopia's Children. It is possible that the Committee being established to evaluate the candidates in Addis Ababa will also interview applicants before final decisions will be made.

Any interested parties should write directly to: **The Scholarship Committee, Ethiopian Crown Council, PO Box 20863, Alexandria, VA 22320, USA.**

Applicants should state their desired area of study, within the disciplines available; their educational background; and provide a brief written essay, in English, and another in Amharic, as to why they wish to study in the US and what they would do with their training once they return to Ethiopia. Full contact details should be provided.

Applications should reach the Committee by July 1, 1999. ★

Geography's Impact on Ethiopian Strategic Development

Continued from Page Four

The Emperor continued his description of his Order of Battle by noting the deployments on the Center Front, the Right and Left Wings. The deployment would have been familiar to Emperor Menelik, save for the fact that the Army — which only seven years earlier was but partially converted to khaki and modern structures — now had many more modern weapons and some automation. But it was not an army to match the by-now state-of-the-art Italian combined-arms operation, strongly supported by air power.

The Battle of Maytchäw was probably the last major set-piece battle in which a reigning monarch commanded an army in the field. The Ethiopian Army consisted of traditional elements which would not survive the end of World War II, although the titles of *ras* and *dejazmatch* continued to be given to senior military officers. At Maytchäw, there were the "corps of Schneider rifle carriers", and "the Army of Wallägа Arjo and of Wallägа Gudru". There was a contingent under a *Liqä Mäkwas* [one of the Emperor's favorites, Haylä Waldä Gäbr'el], and "the Army of the Ministry of Agriculture". There were the armies of various other districts, and various other ministries (such as the Army of the Treasury and Stores, the Army of the Ministry of Finance), and the Army of the Master of the Horse, the "excellent rifle bearers", and so on.

As in historical times, the Army was accompanied by the supreme pontiff of the Church, *Abuna* Petros, bishop of Wallo, and the second highest-ranking churchman, *Etchege* Gäbrä Giyorgis, and other notables. A retinue of other priests, princes and nobles kept close to the Emperor to offer advice.

There was no mistaking the occasion: it was a nation gathered into war to defend itself. In this event, in the short-term, it failed. Italy overran much of Ethiopia, but without conquering it. The ongoing war, when conventional defense was no longer possible, transformed into a vicious guerilla conflict, with the Italians — who had defied all international convention in the use of chemical weapons, banned after World War I — suppressing the population violently. Ultimately, the conventional war returned as the tide turned against Italy, and Ethiopian and British forces — with the Emperor and his son, *Alga Worrach* Asfa Wossen, and the Duke of Harar and other princes and nobles at the head of the Ethiopian forces — re-took the country. But by that time, Ethiopia's forces had the look of an army of the mid-20th Century. The rhinoceros-hide shields were gone, and the lion mane headgear of the Emperor and *dejazmatches* at the 1930 coronation were relegated forever to glass cases or an occasional ceremonial event.

But the Battle of Maytchäw and the ensuing national uprising against the Italians showed that Ethiopia could unite as a single nation against external aggression, as it had earlier done at Adwa in 1896. The strong symbols of nationhood were there, and they were potent. All that was required was that they be married to modern technology, modern structures of deployment and employment, and a more fluid approach to command and control.

Ethiopia had a modern Army in mid-1998, when the Eritreans used a ragtag force to occupy the Yirga triangle area of Tigré. Only a month before the incursion, the administration of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi had declared the 70,000 to 80,000-man Ethiopian Defense Force to be operationally ready to fulfill its duties. As it transpired, it was not. The Ethiopian defense budget, declared in July 1998 to be equal to US$144-million, was, in fact, only the tip of the iceberg of what the Meles administration was, in fact, allocating to the military. According to former Ethiopian Ambassador to Paris Imru Zelleke, one of the leaders of the Ethiopian opposition in exile, Meles was in reality diverting the equivalent of some 30 to 40 percent of Ethiopia's national budget toward defense.

And yet Ethiopia could still not dislodge the Eritrean forces. The nation would not unify behind the "modern" government of Meles Zenawi unless Meles agreed to restore human rights, open the political debate, and restore a free press and some of the traditional structures of Ethiopia. In 1935-41, Ethiopia, although impoverished and backward in some of its military capabilities, could unite and defeat a modern military power. In 1998, with the advantages of a war-seasoned army — which had spent almost two decades fighting in the field as a guerilla force — Ethiopia's politicians could not inspire the unity of the country to defend the borders.

Having said this, almost all elements of Ethiopian society were, indeed, unified in their wish to oust the Eritrean forces from Tigré and broadly condemned the atrocities inflicted on their Tigrean and Afar citizenry. However, the Meles administration, fearful of allowing any concession to "opposition" elements, was reluctant to allow compromise on the issue of political prisoners, declaring that there were "only convicted criminals" in the prisons of Ethiopia. Meles hesitated, too, on the restoration of traditional symbols, even to save the country.

The war of 1998-99 again demonstrated the impact of geography on Ethiopia's progress. The Red Sea sealanes of communications (SLOCs) dictated that Eritrea's importance to the world trading community appeared, at first glance, to be more important than Ethiopia's population and productive capacity. At another level, however, it was geography which had historically divided the coastal, trading Eritreans from the productive heartland of the Ethiopia of which they were an integral part.

The fact that, in 1997, Eritrea was one of the world's leading exporters of coffee is indicative of the underlying factors: Eritrea grows no coffee. It is imported from Ethiopia for re-export. Thus, the symbiotic, and often adversarial, nature of bilateral relations becomes more apparent: Eritrea, the trader, needs Ethiopia to provide the goods with which it can trade. If, with the declining nature of relations — due to the introduction of the Eritrean *nakfa*, among other things — meant that Ethiopia was to find new avenues of exporting its goods, through Djibouti for example, then Eritrea would undoubtedly suffer. Hence the need for Eritrea's Isayas Afewerke to react strongly in the hope of shaking Meles Zenawi from the Ethiopian leadership.

Geography begets geopolitics. The importance of Ethiopia and Ethiopians illustrates this. The admixture of people and geography shapes cultures; cultures imply social politics.

The very existence of Ethiopia astride the Rift Valley, the apparent point of origin of human evolution, dictated, inevitably that Ethiopian society would evolve at an earlier period than society elsewhere. Equally inevitably, other ancient civilizations would develop nearby as the human population expanded, and the proximity of the people in the Ethiopian area to the ancient states of Egypt and Israel meant that interaction would shape Ethiopian society and history.

Queen Makeda was able to visit King Solomon because of the geographic proximity. Moses led the Jewish people out of bondage in Egypt across the Red Sea from a point believed by many historians to have been in Eritrea, rather than taking them across the contiguous landbridge of the Sinai. This implied that the "Egypt" which Moses was fleeing was far closer to Ethiopia than is now the case. We know that the Ethiopian and Egyptian cultures met at Meroé, once an independent kingdom on the Nile in what is now Sudan, near the modern Ethiopian border.

The interaction between the ancient biblical societies of (among others) Israel, Ethiopia and Egypt was a natural and inevitable consequence of geography. The durability of the different symbols, beliefs and cultures of these civilizations, and the fact that these civilizations were basically the building blocks of the West, has meant that their impact on the entire world is still being seen. If the Solomonic or Davidic religious strands of Israel and Ethiopia remain a visceral part of the region, then this should come as no surprise. Islam, which evolved like Christianity from the line of Abraham, is part of the same geographic-social pattern.

The intensity of the intertwining of ongoing religious-cultural symbolism with everyday life in a society which has been as protected by geography as Ethiopia should also come as no surprise. It is the rest of the world which has changed: as the spread of humankind occurred, the teachings of the old religions and old customs became, where they were maintained at all, more abstract and academic. In Ethiopia, as with Israel through much of this period, and Arabia — but more in Ethiopia than elsewhere because of the isolation — it is still more natural for people to lead a life in harmony with their religion and culture, despite the invasion of modern communications and the exposure which today's modern transportation brings. ★

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One of Ethiopia's treasured institutions of the modern era, the beautiful Holy Trinity Cathedral, is under threat from the ravages of time. It urgently needs a new roof and repairs to other parts of the structure and its decorations.

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